



Indiana Department of Education
SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

ISTEP+: Grade 7

English/Language Arts

Released Items and Scoring Notes

Introduction

Indiana students in Grades 3-8 participated in the *ISTEP+* Spring 2011 administration. The test for *ISTEP+* in Spring 2011 consisted of an Applied Skills section administered in March and a Multiple-Choice section administered in late April and early May. For all grades, the Applied Skills section of the assessment was handscored by trained evaluators. The Multiple-Choice section was machine-scored. Scores for the Applied Skills and Multiple-Choice sections are combined to generate a student's total score.

Test results for both the Multiple-Choice and Applied Skills sections, as well as images of the Applied Skills student responses, are available online. It is the expectation of the Indiana Department of Education that schools will take this opportunity to have a conversation with parents and students about the results. As a springboard for this conversation, the Indiana Department of Education has created this document which outlines the released Applied Skills questions and includes brief scoring notes that describe the given score points and explain the scoring rules and expectations for the individual questions.

This document consists of:

- a brief description of the types of questions assessed by each content area
- a short summary of scoring rules utilized by the trained evaluators
- access to holistic and analytic rubrics used to score student responses
- a copy of the released Applied Skills questions
- anchor papers used by evaluators to distinguish between rubric scores

NOTE: The Applied Skills operational questions are released at the end of each test administration. It is important to keep in mind that a significant portion of a student's score is calculated from the Multiple-Choice section of the assessment, which is not addressed within this document.

QUESTION TYPES

This document addresses the Applied Skills section of *ISTEP+*, which allows students to demonstrate their understanding of content in a variety of ways. The Applied Skills Assessment consists of constructed-response (CR) and extended-response (ER) questions. CR and ER questions are cognitively more demanding than multiple-choice (MC) questions. ER questions are typically more complex and will likely require more steps to respond. For English/Language Arts, a Writing Prompt (WP) is also used to assess students.

SCORING

For the Applied Skills Assessment, each question is scored according to a rubric. Rubrics clearly define the requirements for each score point. Each student response is evaluated individually to determine whether it is acceptable. This allows student scores to be reported as accurately as possible. To ensure consistency when scoring the *ISTEP+* questions, CTB/McGraw-Hill works closely with assessment specialists at the Indiana Department of Education and teacher committees to set guidelines for scoring student responses. Committees look at several student papers and score them using the rubrics. Some of the student responses are selected as anchor papers and are used as clear examples of specific score points. Samples of anchor papers are presented within this document. Scoring supervisors then use anchor papers and approved, scored student responses to ensure that responses are evaluated appropriately and consistently. Individuals who evaluate and score *ISTEP+* student responses must have a four-year college degree and pass a series of qualifying tests on specific questions before they can evaluate any student responses.

If a response is unscorable, it is assigned one of the following condition codes:

- A** Blank/No Response/Refusal
- B** Illegible
- C** Written predominantly in a language other than English
- D** Insufficient response/Copied from text
- E** Response not related to test questions or scoring rule (not applied to Mathematics questions)

For additional information regarding *ISTEP+* or other student assessments, please contact the Indiana Department of Education by calling 317-232-9050 or via email: istep@doe.in.gov.

The chart below summarizes the question types used to measure a student’s mastery of content, the assessment that contains the particular question type, the standards assessed in each assessment, and the scoring method used to evaluate a student’s response given the question type.

Question Type	Assessment	Standards Assessed	Scoring Method
Multiple-Choice (MC)	Multiple-Choice Assessment	All	Machine-Scored
Constructed-Response (CR)	Applied Skills Assessment	2 & 3	2-pt. CR Rubric (Grades 3-12)
Extended-Response (ER)	Applied Skills Assessment	5 & 6	4-pt. WA Rubric (Grades 5-8) 4-pt. LC Rubric (Grades 5-12)
Writing Prompt	Applied Skills Assessment	5 & 6	6-pt. WA Rubric (Grades 5-8) 4-pt. LC Rubric (Grades 5-12)

More information is available regarding these assessment topics on the Office of Student Assessment homepage at www.doe.in.gov/assessment.

Writing Prompt
Standard 5: Writing Applications
Standard 6: English Language Conventions

An Unusual Day

Read the writing prompt below and complete the writing activity.

You arrive at school on Monday morning, and you notice that something seems different. Students are gathered in small groups, smiling, laughing, and clearly excited about something. Wondering what could be going on, you approach a group of students to find out what is happening.

Think about an unusual day at school that you or someone you know experienced. What was unusual about the day? How did you and the other students react?

Write a story about this day, and describe what you or someone you know experienced.

Be sure to include

- an explanation of how the day was unusual
- a description of how you and the other students reacted
- a description of your own thoughts and actions on that day
- a beginning, a middle, and an end to your story

Writing Applications Rubric Grades 5–12

SCORE POINT 6

A Score Point 6 paper is rare. It fully accomplishes the task in a thorough and insightful manner and has a distinctive quality that sets it apart as an outstanding performance.

Ideas and Content

Does the writing sample fully accomplish the task (e.g., support an opinion, summarize, tell a story, or write an article)? Does it

- present a unifying theme or main idea without going off on tangents?
- stay completely focused on topic and task?

Does the writing sample include thorough, relevant, and complete ideas? Does it

- include in-depth information and exceptional supporting details that are fully developed?
- fully explore many facets of the topic?

Organization

Are the ideas in the writing sample organized logically? Does the writing

- present a meaningful, cohesive whole with a beginning, a middle, and an end (i.e., include an inviting introduction and a strong conclusion)?
- progress in an order that enhances meaning?
- include smooth transitions between ideas, sentences, and paragraphs to enhance meaning of text (i.e., have a clear connection of ideas and use topic sentences)?

Style

Does the writing sample exhibit exceptional word usage? Does it

- include vocabulary to make explanations detailed and precise, descriptions rich, and actions clear and vivid (e.g., varied word choices, action words, appropriate modifiers, sensory details)?
- demonstrate control of a challenging vocabulary?

Does the writing sample demonstrate exceptional writing technique?

- Is the writing exceptionally fluent?
- Does it include varied sentence patterns, including complex sentences?
- Does it demonstrate use of writer's techniques (e.g., literary conventions such as imagery and dialogue and/or literary genres such as humor and suspense)?

Voice

Does the writing sample demonstrate effective adjustment of language and tone to task and reader? Does it

- exhibit appropriate register (e.g., formal, personal, or dialect) to suit task?
- demonstrate a strong sense of audience?
- exhibit an original perspective (e.g., authoritative, lively, and/or exciting)?

NOTE: These scoring rubrics are used with statewide assessments in Grades 5–12.

Writing Applications Rubric Grades 5–12

SCORE POINT 5	
A Score Point 5 paper represents a solid performance. It fully accomplishes the task, but lacks the overall level of sophistication and consistency of a Score Point 6 paper.	
Ideas and Content	
<p>Does the writing sample fully accomplish the task (e.g., support an opinion, summarize, tell a story, or write an article)? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present a unifying theme or main idea without going off on tangents? • stay focused on topic and task? <p>Does the writing sample include many relevant ideas? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide in-depth information and more than adequate supporting details that are developed? • explore many facets of the topic? 	
Organization	
<p>Are the ideas in the writing sample organized logically? Does the writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present a meaningful, cohesive whole with a beginning, a middle, and an end (i.e., include a solid introduction and conclusion)? • progress in an order that enhances meaning of text? • include smooth transitions (e.g., use topic sentences) between sentences and paragraphs to enhance meaning of text? (Writing may have an occasional lapse.) 	
Style	
<p>Does the writing sample exhibit very good word usage? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include vocabulary to make explanations detailed and precise, descriptions rich, and actions clear and vivid? • demonstrate control of vocabulary? <p>Does the writing sample demonstrate very good writing technique?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the writing very fluent? • Does it include varied sentence patterns, including complex sentences? • Does it demonstrate use of writer's techniques (e.g., literary conventions such as imagery and dialogue and/or literary genres such as humor and suspense)? 	
Voice	
<p>Does the writing sample demonstrate effective adjustment of language and tone to task and reader? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exhibit appropriate register (e.g., formal, personal, or dialect) to suit task? • demonstrate a sense of audience? • exhibit an original perspective (e.g., authoritative, lively, and/or exciting)? 	

NOTE: These scoring rubrics are used with statewide assessments in Grades 5–12.

Writing Applications Rubric Grades 5–12

SCORE POINT 4	
A Score Point 4 paper represents a good performance. It accomplishes the task, but generally needs to exhibit more development, better organization, or a more sophisticated writing style to receive a higher score.	
Ideas and Content	
<p>Does the writing sample accomplish the task (e.g., support an opinion, summarize, tell a story, or write an article)? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present a unifying theme or main idea? (Writing may include minor tangents.) • stay mostly focused on topic and task? <p>Does the writing sample include relevant ideas? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include sufficient information and supporting details? (Details may not be fully developed; ideas may be listed.) • explore some facets of the topic? 	
Organization	
<p>Are the ideas in the writing sample organized logically? Does the writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present a meaningful whole with a beginning, a middle, and an end despite an occasional lapse (e.g., a weak introduction or conclusion)? • generally progress in an order that enhances meaning of text? • include transitions between sentences and paragraphs to enhance meaning of text? (Transitions may be rough, although some topic sentences are included.) 	
Style	
<p>Does the writing sample exhibit good word usage? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include vocabulary that is appropriately chosen, with words that clearly convey the writer's meaning? • demonstrate control of basic vocabulary? <p>Does the writing sample demonstrate good writing technique?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the writing fluent? • Does it exhibit some varied sentence patterns, including some complex sentences? • Does it demonstrate an attempt to use writer's techniques (e.g., literary conventions such as imagery and dialogue and/or literary genres such as humor and suspense)? 	
Voice	
<p>Does the writing sample demonstrate an attempt to adjust language and tone to task and reader? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generally exhibit appropriate register (e.g., formal, personal, or dialect) to suit task? (The writing may occasionally slip out of register.) • demonstrate some sense of audience? • attempt an original perspective? 	

NOTE: These scoring rubrics are used with statewide assessments in Grades 5–12.

Writing Applications Rubric Grades 5–12

SCORE POINT 3	
A Score Point 3 paper represents a performance that minimally accomplishes the task. Some elements of development, organization, and writing style are weak.	
Ideas and Content	
<p>Does the writing sample minimally accomplish the task (e.g., support an opinion, summarize, tell a story, or write an article)? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attempt a unifying theme or main idea? • stay somewhat focused on topic and task? <p>Does the writing sample include some relevant ideas? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include some information with only a few details, or list ideas without supporting details? • explore some facets of the topic? 	
Organization	
<p>Is there an attempt to logically organize ideas in the writing sample? Does the writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a beginning, a middle, or an end that may be weak or absent? • demonstrate an attempt to progress in an order that enhances meaning? (Progression of text may sometimes be unclear or out of order.) • demonstrate an attempt to include transitions? (Are some topic sentences used? Are transitions between sentences and paragraphs weak or absent?) 	
Style	
<p>Does the writing sample exhibit ordinary word usage? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contain basic vocabulary, with words that are predictable and common? • demonstrate some control of vocabulary? <p>Does the writing sample demonstrate average writing technique?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the writing generally fluent? • Does it contain mostly simple sentences (although there may be an attempt at more varied sentence patterns)? • Is it generally ordinary and predictable? 	
Voice	
<p>Does the writing sample demonstrate an attempt to adjust language and tone to task and reader? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate a difficulty in establishing a register (e.g., formal, personal, or dialect)? • demonstrate little sense of audience? • generally lack an original perspective? 	

NOTE: These scoring rubrics are used with statewide assessments in Grades 5–12.

Writing Applications Rubric Grades 5–12

SCORE POINT 2

A Score Point 2 paper represents a performance that only partially accomplishes the task. Some responses may exhibit difficulty maintaining a focus. Others may be too brief to provide sufficient development of the topic or evidence of adequate organizational or writing style.

Ideas and Content

Does the writing sample only partially accomplish the task (e.g., support an opinion, summarize, tell a story, or write an article)? Does it

- attempt a main idea?
- sometimes lose focus or ineffectively display focus?

Does the writing sample include few relevant ideas? Does it

- include little information and few or no details?
- explore only one or two facets of the topic?

Organization

Is there a minimal attempt to logically organize ideas in the writing sample?

- Does the writing have only one or two of the three elements: beginning, middle, and end?
- Is the writing sometimes difficult to follow? (Progression of text may be confusing or unclear.)
- Are transitions weak or absent (e.g., few or no topic sentences)?

Style

Does the writing sample exhibit minimal word usage? Does it

- contain limited vocabulary? (Some words may be used incorrectly.)
- demonstrate minimal control of vocabulary?

Does the writing sample demonstrate minimal writing technique?

- Does the writing exhibit some fluency?
- Does it rely mostly on simple sentences?
- Is it often repetitive, predictable, or dull?

Voice

Does the writing sample demonstrate language and tone that may be inappropriate to task and reader? Does it

- demonstrate use of a register inappropriate to the task (e.g., slang or dialect in a formal setting)?
- demonstrate little or no sense of audience?
- lack an original perspective?

NOTE: These scoring rubrics are used with statewide assessments in Grades 5–12.

Writing Applications Rubric Grades 5–12

SCORE POINT 1
<p>A Score Point 1 paper represents a performance that fails to accomplish the task. It exhibits considerable difficulty in areas of development, organization, and writing style. The writing is generally either very brief or rambling and repetitive, sometimes resulting in a response that may be difficult to read or comprehend.</p>
<p>Ideas and Content</p> <p>Does the writing sample fail to accomplish the task (e.g., support an opinion, summarize, tell a story, or write an article)? Is it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • difficult for the reader to discern the main idea? • too brief or too repetitive to establish or maintain a focus? <p>Does the writing sample include very few relevant ideas?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it include little information with few or no details or unrelated details? • Is it unsuccessful in attempts to explore any facets of the prompt?
<p>Organization</p> <p>Are the ideas in the writing sample organized illogically?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does it have only one or two of the three elements: beginning, middle, or end? • Is it difficult to follow, with the order possibly difficult to discern? • Are transitions weak or absent (e.g., without topic sentences)?
<p>Style</p> <p>Does the writing sample exhibit less than minimal word usage? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contain limited vocabulary, with many words used incorrectly? • demonstrate minimal or less than minimal control of vocabulary? <p>Does the writing sample demonstrate less than minimal writing technique? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lack fluency? • demonstrate problems with sentence patterns? • consist of writing that is flat and lifeless?
<p>Voice</p> <p>Does the writing sample demonstrate language and tone that may be inappropriate to task and reader? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate difficulty in choosing an appropriate register? • demonstrate a lack of a sense of audience? • lack an original perspective?

NOTE: These scoring rubrics are used with statewide assessments in Grades 5–12.

Language Conventions Rubric Grades 5–8

In their writing, students will apply the Standard English conventions defined in the Indiana Academic Standards for their grade and all previous grades.

Score	Does the writing sample exhibit a good command of language skills?
4	<p>In a Score Point 4 paper, there are no errors that impair the flow of communication. Errors are infrequent and have a minor impact on the overall communication; they are generally of the first-draft variety and may occur when students attempt sophisticated sentence construction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do words have very few or no capitalization errors? • Do sentences have very few or no punctuation errors? • Do words have very few or no spelling errors? • Do sentences have very few or no grammar or word usage errors? • Writing has very few or no paragraphing errors. • Writing has very few or no run-on sentences or sentence fragments.
Score	Does the writing sample exhibit an adequate command of language skills?
3	<p>In a Score Point 3 paper, errors are occasional but do not impede the flow of communication; the writer's meaning is not seriously obscured by errors in language conventions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do words have occasional capitalization errors? • Do sentences have occasional punctuation errors? • Do words have occasional spelling errors? • Do sentences have occasional grammar or word usage errors? • Writing may have occasional paragraphing errors. • Writing may have run-on sentences or sentence fragments.
Score	Does the writing sample exhibit a minimal command of language skills?
2	<p>In a Score Point 2 paper, errors are typically frequent and may cause the reader to stop and reread part of the writing. While some aspects of the writing may be more consistently correct than others, the existing errors do impair communication. With a little extra effort on the reader's part, it is still possible to discern most, if not all, of what the writer is trying to communicate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do words have frequent capitalization errors? • Do sentences have frequent punctuation errors? • Do words have frequent spelling errors? • Do sentences have frequent grammar or word usage errors? • Writing may have errors in paragraphing, or paragraphing may be missing. • Writing is likely to have run-on sentences or sentence fragments.
Score	Does the writing sample exhibit a less than minimal command of language skills?
1	<p>In a Score Point 1 paper, errors are serious and numerous; they often cause the reader to struggle to discern the writer's meaning. Errors are frequently of a wide variety. There may be sections where it is impossible to ascertain what the writer is attempting to communicate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do words have many capitalization errors? • Do sentences have many punctuation errors? • Do words have many spelling errors? • Do sentences have many grammar and word usage errors? • Writing may have errors in paragraphing, or paragraphing may be missing. • Writing is likely to have run-on sentences or sentence fragments.

NOTE: The elements of this rubric are applied holistically; no element is intended to supersede any other element. The variety and proportion of errors in relation to the length of the writing sample are considered. A very brief paper consisting of two or three sentences may receive no more than 2 score points.

These scoring rubrics are used on the spring *ISTEP+* assessment in Grades 5–8.

Writing Prompt, Sample A
Writing Applications – Score Point 6
Language Conventions – Score Point 4

The Day of Substitutes

It started off as a normal Monday morning. My alarm clock had disturbed my pleasant dreams by waking me up at the crack of dawn. I had thrown on some clothes, ate a hurried breakfast, and brushed my teeth, all before running outside to catch the bus. Another Monday. I sighed as I walked into the building, expecting to see my friends, with sleep still in their eyes, yawning and stretching like every day.

Being sleep deprived, myself, I didn't notice that anything was different until I got to my locker. A group of kids were standing close to each other. They were laughing and smiling, having a great time. I watched in amazement, for this behavior was never seen on a Monday. Finally I came to my senses.

"Hi, everyone," I said, walking over to them. "What's the big deal? Why are you all so . . . happy?"

"Haven't you heard," said a tall boy who was smiling. "All of the teachers are out on a conference!"

"Yeah," another girl added, "there are just substitutes today!"

"Seriously?" I questioned, "How can every teacher in school be gone?"

"I don't know," said the girl, "but look around you. It's like the day of substitutes!"

As I walked down the hallways, I saw that the kids had been right. All of the teachers were gone; they had been replaced confused-looking substitutes, wearing their "Guest Teacher" badges, and staring in awe at the number of their fellow colleagues!

As I was walking, I met my friend Laura.

"Laura!" I said walking up to her. "Have you heard the news?"

"Yes!" she said happily. "All subs, all day!"

"Looks like we've got a day of watching movies, listening to our iPods, and NO WORK ahead of us!" I exclaimed.

As we walked to our first class, social studies, we were not surprised to find a portly, middle-aged man sitting at the desk in the front of the room.

"Class, please take your seats so that I can take attendance. My name is Mr. P, and today I think we will be watching a movie."

My class was delighted to discover, that our next three classes were similar to the first. In Math and Language Arts we watched movies and talked for the whole period. In Science, the substitute passed out candy and let us listen to music. The day couldn't have been better!

During lunch, kids relayed stories of guest teachers who let them throw paper wads and spit balls. Others claimed that they had a teacher who simply walked out of the room for a cup of coffee and never came back!

After lunch I had Health class, usually the most boring class of the day, but today I looked forward to maybe another movie.

So you can imagine my shock when the substitute announced that not only would we be doing bookwork, but we would not be allowed to talk. A boy raised his hand.

"Can we listen to our iPods?"

"No!" cried the outraged sub, "iPods are not allowed at school!"

"But the other teachers let us!" a girl whined.

"Then the other teachers are not doing their job right!" he proclaimed, "I intend for you to learn today, and even if you don't like it, you will do what I tell you to do!"

I gazed around at my fellow classmates. Some had looks of outrage on their faces, other cursed under their breath, but everyone took out their books and did the work. Even though we didn't like it, the substitute kept us under control. At the end of the day, I had more respect for them than any other teacher. I think the main reason I really appreciated him so much was realized the next day, when all of the teachers had returned from their conference, and each and every one gave us a pop quiz. The only one I passed was in Health!

Writing Applications – Score Point 6

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 6** using the ISTEP+ Writing Applications Rubric.

This sample

- fully accomplishes the task (i.e., writes a story about an unusual day at school describing what was unusual about the day and how you and the other students react).
- stays completely focused on the topic.
- provides in-depth information and exceptional supporting details (e.g., *I sighed as I walked into the building, expecting to see my friends, with sleep still in their eyes, yawning and stretching like every day.*).
- organizes ideas logically and creates a meaningful, cohesive whole; has a strong introduction, body, and conclusion (e.g., *I think the main reason I really appreciated him so much was realized the next day, when all of the teachers had returned from their conference, and each and every one gave us a pop quiz.*).
- demonstrates exceptional word usage with excellent writing technique, varying vocabulary throughout the essay (e.g., *Being sleep deprived, myself, I didn't notice that anything was different until I got to my locker.*).
- is exceptionally fluent; the writer includes varied sentence patterns, including complex sentences. (e.g., *They were laughing and smiling, having a great time. I watched in amazement, for this behavior was never seen on a Monday.*).
- displays a strong sense of audience, an appropriate personal register and exhibits an original perspective. (e.g., *So you can imagine my shock when the substitute announced that not only would we be doing homework, but we would not be allowed to talk.*).

NOTE: Per the Writing Applications Rubric (grades 5-12), a Score Point 6 paper is rare. It fully accomplishes the task in a thorough and insightful manner and has a distinctive quality that sets it apart as an outstanding performance.

Language Conventions – Score Point 4

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 4** using the ISTEP+ Language Conventions Rubric.

This sample

- uses mostly correct capitalization (e.g., *Health* [health], *Math* [math], *Language Arts* [language arts]).
- has correct punctuation.
- has mostly correct spelling (e.g., *attendance* [attendance]).
- has mostly correct grammar, with one missing word (e.g., *by*) and incorrect pronoun (e.g., *them*).
- uses paragraphs correctly.
- sentence fragments are stylistic and not considered errors.

Writing Prompt, Sample B

Writing Applications – Score Point 5

Language Conventions – Score Point 4

Not Your Everyday

The school day was like any other day for me, get up, get dressed, and brush my hair. Then I got in the car with my mom to drive me to school. The car ride seemed much longer than any other day, and the quietness was driving me insane. When my mom pulled up and I hopped out I had noticed everyone was excited and jittery. I walked up to my group of friends and asked what was going on. She said that we were having an essembly in the gym 3rd hour today about a celebrity whos coming in and talking to us. She screamed it so loud I thought I had gone deaf for a second.

By the time 3rd hour came around everyone kept getting fidgety, so I was thinking it was some new celebrity or someone I had never heard of before. At about 10:00 am we were on our way to the gym and everyone was in groups and talking about who is talking to us in the gym. When we finally got to the gym the bleachers were pulled out and everyone was sitting with their own class, luckily we got front row. Everyone was so excited, and so quiet just waiting for the celebrity to finally get there. Then when there was complete silence we could hear footsteps coming down the hallway, then there she was! It was, it was, everyone just stared, it was Taylor Swift! I was finally excited and so were my other friends scattered accross the bleachers. Not that many people weren't excited to see her, they weren't that excited because she didn't exactly sing the kind of music they liked but I didn't care I was bursting with excitement. She walked up to the middle of the gym and spoke. "Hi, I'm so happy to be here today. I just wanted to talk about my kind of job and how I followed my dream to get where I am." "I also wanted to sing you guys some songs while I was here too." Then after about an hour or two of cheering and excitement she was gone. I couldn't believe she was here and gone so fast, but I really had to go to the restroom so I ran to the girls room, but while I was in there so was she. She looked at me and said, "Hi, did you enjoy the assembly." I stared and said, "Umm, yeah. . . it was great." "I just wish you could have stayed a bit longer, because I love your

music." She looked at me and said sweetly, "Thanks, you know what. . . how about I give you and your family front row tickets and backstage passes for my next concert in Chicago." I was just shocked out of my mind, I couldn't even think straight. She said goodbye and I thanked her so much.

After I came out of the bathroom she was already gone. I didn't tell anyone what had happened. When I went home I was so ecstatic to tell my parents what had happened. They couldn't believe their ears or eyes or anything. I couldn't wait for her concert to come around.

In that crazy school day I met a celebrity, and got front row tickets to her concert. This was sure no ordinary day because I never met a celebrity in my life and I think that's extraordinary compared to having science, isn't it? This day was the best extraordinary day ever, and it was all true! (not really)

Notes for Writing Prompt, Sample B

Writing Applications – Score Point 5

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 5** using the ISTEP+ Writing Applications Rubric.

This sample

- fully accomplishes the task (i.e., writes a story about an unusual day at school describing what was unusual about the day and how you and the other students react.).
- stays focused on the topic.
- includes many relevant ideas that are well developed (e.g., *When we finally got to the gym the bleachers were pulled out and everyone was sitting with their own class, luckily [luckily] we got front row.*).
- is organized logically and cohesively with an introduction, body, and conclusion. Includes smooth transitions between paragraphs (e.g., *By the time 3rd hour came around everyone kept getting fidgety. . .*).
- exhibits more than adequate word usage (e.g., *When my mom pulled up and I hopped out I had noticed everyone was excited and jittery.*).
- is easy to read and uses varied sentence patterns, including complex sentences. (e.g., *Everyone was so excited, and so quiet just waiting for the celebrity to finally get there.*).
- displays an appropriate personal register exhibits and original perspective (e.g., *In that crazy school day I met a celebrity, and got front row tickets to her concert.*).

NOTE: A Score Point 5 paper represents a solid performance. It fully accomplishes the task, but lacks the overall level of sophistication and consistency of a Score Point 6 paper.

Language Conventions – Score Point 4

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 4** using the ISTEP+ Language Conventions Rubric.

This sample

- uses correct capitalization.
- has mostly correct punctuation with occasional incorrectly used comma and end marks, extra quotation marks, and missing apostrophe (e.g., *She looked at me and said, “Hi, did you enjoy the assembly. [?]”*).
- has some spelling errors (e.g., *essembly [assesmbly], luckily [luckily], accross [across]*).
- has mostly correct grammar and word usage.
- has run-on sentences (e.g., *Not that many people weren’t excited to see her, [but] they weren’t that excited because she didn’t exactly sing the kind of music they liked [.] but [However,] I didn’t care[;] I was bursting with excitement.*).

Writing Prompt, Sample C
Writing Applications – Score Point 4
Language Conventions – Score Point 4

When I got to school one morning I walked into the gym and everyone was whispering. The students had worried looks on their faces. I walked towards a group of people and asked what was going on. They looked at me and then they got out their cellphone. They scrolled down to the calendar. Today was Friday the 13th of October.

We heard the bell ring. I stood up and scanned the gym. The student all looked nervous. When they started walking to their class, they took very cautious steps. They looked terrified to touch any of their school books as if they did their books were going to come alive and attack them.

I was just as nervous and scared as everyone else. I was afraid that if I moved even an inch that a piano would come crashing down through the ceiling and squish me like bug. I thought if I opened a door a black cat would come running out and scratching up my arms and legs. So I walked slowly and quietly to all of my classes. No one could concentrate on anything the teachers were trying to teach. No one even really spoke to each other.

Then the lunch bell rang and we all tiptoed our way to the cafeteria. We checked the seats before we sat down. Some students checked their food before eating it, but some students didn't eat at all.

The rest of the day went the same way as the beginning. Quiet and slowly. Everyone was waiting for it to be over.

Finally the day came to an end, and I realized that nothing bad happened to me today, but it was the most boring day of my life. I was so glad when Saturday came the next day.

Writing Applications – Score Point 4

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 4** using the ISTEP+ Writing Applications Rubric.

This sample

- accomplishes the task (i.e., writes a story about an unusual day at school describing what was unusual about the day and how you and the other students react.).
- stays mostly focused on the topic.
- includes sufficient information and some supporting details (e.g., *I was afraid that if I moved even an inch that a piano would come crashing down through the ceiling and squish me like a bug.*).
- progresses in a logical order with paragraphs, has clear introduction, body, and conclusion. Uses transitions to show a logical progression of ideas (e.g., *Then the lunch bell rang and we all tiptoed our way to the cafeteria.*).
- demonstrates control of vocabulary that is appropriate to the topic (e.g., *I stood up and scanned the gym.*).
- uses varied sentence patterns, including some complex sentences (e.g., *Some students checked their food before eating it, but some students didn't eat at all.*).
- displays an appropriate personal register. (e.g., *I walked towards a group of people and asked what was going on.*).

NOTE: A Score Point 4 paper represents a good performance. It accomplishes the task, but generally needs to exhibit more development, better organization, and more sophisticated writing style to receive a higher score.

Language Conventions – Score Point 4

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 4** using the ISTEP+ Language Conventions Rubric.

This sample

- has correct capitalization.
- has a few punctuation errors (e.g., *Friday [,] the 13th of October.*).
- has some spelling errors (e.g., *cationous* [cautious], *cellphone* [cell phone]).
- has some grammatical errors (e.g., *The student[s] all looked nervous.*).
- has a run-on sentence (e.g., *They looked terrified to touch any of their school books [,] as [As] if they did [,] their books were going come alive and attack them.*).
- uses paragraphs correctly.

Writing Prompt, Sample D

Writing Applications – Score Point 3

Language Conventions – Score Point 3

I walked into school one day and went to eat breakfast. I got my tray with what I usually get biscuits and gravy. Which I always thought was too soggy and plain. I went and sat down at the same white table that I sit down at lunch. As I started gobbling my breakfast I looked around for a moment. And I noticed. . . Every one was wearing either a Black, white, or red shirt. I let out a short sigh and finished my breakfast.

As the school day went on I still wonder why every one was wearing red, white, and black shirts. I got all the way to fifth period until I remembered it was school spirit day. I looked down at my shirt I was wearing my dull old navy blue shirt. I smiled for a quick second and went back to my work forgetting about every one.

Writing Applications – Score Point 3

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 3** using the ISTEP+ Writing Applications Rubric.

This sample

- minimally accomplishes the task (i.e., writes a story about an unusual day at school describing what was unusual about the day and how you and the other students react.).
- stays somewhat focused on the topic.
- includes a few supporting details (e.g., *I looked down at my shirt [.] I was wearing my dull old navy blue shirt.*).
- attempts to organize ideas with a weak introduction, a body that lacks development, and a weak conclusion. (e.g., *I walked into school one day and went to eat breakfast.*).
- uses basic vocabulary and demonstrates some control of vocabulary. (e.g., *I let out a short sigh and finished my breakfast [breakfast].*).
- displays occasional sense of voice (e.g., *I smiled at everyone for a quick second and went back to my work forgetting [forgetting] about every one [everyone].*).

NOTE: A Score Point 3 paper represents a performance that minimally accomplishes the task. Some elements of development, organization, and writing style are weak.

Language Conventions – Score Point 3

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 3** using the ISTEP+ Language Conventions Rubric.

This sample

- has some capitalization errors (e.g., *Every one* [everyone], *Black* [black]).
- has some incorrect punctuation (e.g., *I got my tray with what I usually get [.] biscuits* [biscuits] *and gravy.*).
- has spelling errors (e.g., *gobbeling* [gobbling], *etheir* [either], *breakfest* [breakfast]).
- contains some grammar error and word usage errors (e.g., *to* [too], *every one* [everyone]).
- has sentence fragments and a run-on sentence. (e.g., *Which* [begin with I] *I always thought [it] was to [too] soggy and plain.*).

Writing Prompt, Sample E

Writing Applications – Score Point 2

Language Conventions – Score Point 2

one day while I was at School, we had a mime come and perform for us. He did many things like pretend to paint a wall and pretend to be stuck in a glass box but escaped when he found the doorknob. All of my friend's loved it when he whent completeley still and looked like a statue, but the best part was when he pull on the fake rope. He was a good mime.

Writing Applications – Score Point 2

The following list describes a writing sample (shown above) that earns a **Score Point 2** using the ISTEP+ Writing Applications Rubric.

This sample

- partially accomplishes the task (i.e., writes a story about an unusual day at school describing what was unusual about the day and how you and the other students react.).
- exhibits some focus (e.g., *one [One] day while I was at School [school], we had a mime come and perform for us.*).
- provides few supporting details (e.g., *He did many things like pretend [pretending] to paint a wall and pretend [pretending] to be stuck in a glass box but escaped [escaping] when he found the doorknob.*).
- lacks development of ideas.
- presents ideas in one paragraph.
- exhibits minimal word usage and writing techniques (e.g., *He was a good mime.*).

NOTE: A Score Point 2 paper represents a performance that only partially accomplishes the task. Some responses may exhibit difficulty maintaining a focus. Others may be too brief to provide sufficient development of the topic or evidence of adequate organizational or writing style.

Language Conventions – Score Point 2

The following list describes a writing sample (shown above) that earns a **Score Point 2** using the ISTEP+ Language Conventions Rubric.

This sample

- has capitalization errors (e.g., *one [one], School [school]*).
- has mostly correct punctuation.
- has spelling errors (e.g., *whent [went], completeley [completely]*).
- has incorrect grammar and usage errors (e.g., *friend's [friends], pull [pulled]*).
- has frequent errors in a relatively brief writing sample.
- has no sentence fragments or run-on sentences.

Writing Prompt, Sample F

Writing Applications – Score Point 1

Language Conventions – Score Point 1

When I was in 5th grade. I found out that its valintines day. When I got it school I did not have valintine so I made an bunch of home made cards.

Writing Applications – Score Point 1

The following list describes a writing sample (shown above) that earns a **Score Point 1** using the ISTEP+ Writing Applications Rubric.

This sample

- does not accomplish the task (i.e., writes a story about an unusual day at school describing what was unusual about the day and how you and the other students react.).
- has less than minimal development.
- is too brief to establish an order.
- exhibits minimal word usage.
- demonstrates less than minimal writing technique.

NOTE: A Score Point 1 paper represents a performance that fails to accomplish the task. It exhibits considerable difficulty in areas of development, organization, and writing style. The writing is generally either very brief or rambling and repetitive, sometimes resulting in a response that may be difficult to read or comprehend.

Language Conventions – Score Point 1

The following list describes a writing sample (shown above) that earns a **Score Point 1** using the ISTEP+ Language Conventions Rubric.

This sample

- has capitalization errors (e.g., *valintines day* [Valentine's Day]).
- has missing punctuation.
- has spelling errors (e.g., *valintine* [Valentine], *home made* [homemade]).
- has grammar and word usage errors (e.g., *its* [it's], *an* [a]).
- has sentence fragment (e.g., *When I was in 5th grade.* [When I was in 5th grade, I found out that it's Valentine's Day.]).
- has numerous errors in a brief writing sample.

English/Language Arts Constructed Responses

Session Three, English/Language Arts, contains a reading comprehension task. This task allows the students to demonstrate their understanding and comprehension of narrative or informational text. The reading comprehension task consists of one passage and several constructed-response (CR) questions. Because this is a reading comprehension task, all of the information students need to answer the questions correctly is contained in the text. All responses should be based on information from the text and will be scored for reading comprehension *only*. The following pages display the CR questions.

An example of a top-score response is provided for each CR question. The top-score response demonstrates a performance that exceeds the expectations of what is required to receive two points. The top-score response contains multiple pieces of text-based information and support drawn from the reading passage that accompanied this item, many elements of which students typically use in their responses to receive two points.

Each CR question is followed by sample student responses, called anchor papers. The anchor papers are accompanied by explanations of the score points received.

English/ Language Arts 2-point Constructed-Response (CR) Rubric

2 points	Proficient The response fulfills all the requirements of the task. The information given is text-based and relevant to the task.
1 point	Partially Proficient The response fulfills some of the requirements of the task, but some of the information may be too general, too simplistic, or not supported by the text.
0 point	Not Proficient The response does not fulfill the requirements of the task because it contains information that is inaccurate, incomplete, and/or missing altogether.

Constructed Response
Standard 3: Reading Comprehension and Analysis of Literary Text

Question 1

How does the author show that Sam is nervous about giving his demonstration? Support your answer with details from the story.

Top-Score Response:

The author shows that Sam is nervous by having Sam describe how his yo-yo is frozen in his fist and his heart is pounding as he walks to the front of the room. He mixes up his speech by saying “yemonstrate some do-do tricks.” In his nervousness, he also stutters and drops his yo-yo twice while he is giving his demonstration.

***Note:** The top-score response demonstrates a performance that exceeds the expectations of what is required to receive two points. The top-score response contains multiple pieces of text-based information and support drawn from the reading passage that accompanied this item, many elements of which students typically use in their responses to receive two points.*

Question 1, Sample A – Score Point 2

How does the author show that Sam is nervous about giving his demonstration? Support your answer with details from the story.

The author shows that Sam is nervous about giving his demonstration by making him stutter and also making him lose his grip on his yo-yo a couple times.

Scoring Notes: The response fulfills all the requirements of the task, showing how Sam was nervous (e.g., stutter and lose his grip). The information given is text-based.

Question 1, Sample B – Score Point 1

How does the author show that Sam is nervous about giving his demonstration? Support your answer with details from the story.

He was nervous because
he was not ready to demonstrate
yet.

Scoring Notes: The response fulfills some of the requirements of the task. The response provides little support (e.g., not ready) from the text.

Question 1, Sample C – Score Point 0

How does the author show that Sam is nervous about giving his demonstration? Support your answer with details from the story.

feeling a lot of panic

Scoring Notes: The response does not fulfill the requirements of the task. The response does not provide enough information to answer the question.

Constructed Response
Standard 3: Reading Comprehension and Analysis of Literary Text

Question 2

What will MOST LIKELY happen the next time Sam is asked to give a demonstration in front of his class? Support your answer with details from the story.

Top-Score Response:

The next time Sam gives a demonstration he may not be as nervous because he will remember how much better he felt when he finally relaxed. He was able to successfully demonstrate his Around the World trick and impress everyone once he stopped being nervous.

***Note:** The top-score response demonstrates a performance that exceeds the expectations of what is required to receive two points. The top-score response contains multiple pieces of text-based information and support drawn from the reading passage that accompanied this item, many elements of which students typically use in their responses to receive two points.*

Question 2, Sample A – Score Point 2

What will MOST LIKELY happen the next time Sam is asked to give a demonstration in front of his class? Support your answer with details from the story.

Sam will ~~probably~~ do good and not mess up. After everyone stopped laughing he felt relaxed. When everyone clapped Sam probably felt good and knew he could do it again.

Scoring Notes: The response fulfills all the requirements of the task. The response states what would most likely happen (e.g., Sam will probably do good) and uses text-based support.

Question 2, Sample B – Score Point 1

What will MOST LIKELY happen the next time Sam is asked to give a demonstration in front of his class? Support your answer with details from the story.

Next time Sam is asked i'm sure he won't be nervous, he will be relaxed and ready.

Scoring Notes: The response fulfills some of the requirements of the task. The response states what will most likely happen (e.g., he won't be nervous) but does not have supporting evidence from the text.

Question 2, Sample C – Score Point 0

What will MOST LIKELY happen the next time Sam is asked to give a demonstration in front of his class? Support your answer with details from the story.

I was in mid-chuckle when Mr
Mead announced OK Sam I
think we're ready for you to
try again.

Scoring Notes: The response does not fulfill the requirements of the task. The response does not state what will most likely happen nor show supporting evidence from the text.

Constructed Response
Standard 3: Reading Comprehension and Analysis of Literary Text

Question 3

What lesson does Sam learn by finishing his demonstration? Support your answer with details from the story.

Top-Score Response:

He learns that by relaxing he can be better prepared to show others what he knows. Mr. Mead already knew this, and that is why he wanted Sam to try again after he messed up his yo-yo tricks. Once Sam was relaxed, his demonstration was successful and ended with everyone clapping for him.

***Note:** The top-score response demonstrates a performance that exceeds the expectations of what is required to receive two points. The top-score response contains multiple pieces of text-based information and support drawn from the reading passage that accompanied this item, many elements of which students typically use in their responses to receive two points.*

Question 3, Sample A – Score Point 2

What lesson does Sam learn by finishing his demonstration? Support your answer with details from the story.

By doing the demonstration, Sam learns that if you stay calm, things will go much smoother. When Sam was nervous he messed up, but when Sam was relaxed he did the tricks good.

Scoring Notes: The response fulfills all the requirements of the task. The response shows what Sam learns (e.g., stay calm and relaxed) and uses text-based support.

Question 3, Sample B – Score Point 1

What lesson does Sam learn by finishing his demonstration? Support your answer with details from the story.

That you should never give up if you don't do good the first time.

Scoring Notes: The response fulfills some of the requirements of the task. The student states the lesson Sam learns (e.g., never give up), but does not support it with examples from the text.

Question 3, Sample C – Score Point 0

What lesson does Sam learn by finishing his demonstration? Support your answer with details from the story.

He is good at video games
and sports too.

Scoring Notes: The response does not fulfill the requirements of the task. The response does not explain a lesson Sam learned nor have text-based support.

Extended Response
Standard 5: Writing Applications
Standard 6: English Language Conventions

Question 4

Read this beginning of a student's story. Then complete the writing activity that follows.

Like I do every Tuesday morning, I woke up to the blaring of my alarm clock and rolled over to shut it off. My cat, Tabby, scowled at me and stretched his paws far over his head. I rubbed my eyes to help wake myself up so I could get ready for school. I thought of the math test that I had coming up and about what I might eat for breakfast.

As I climbed out of bed, a thought crossed my mind that today didn't seem like every other Tuesday. "Well, Tabby," I said, "it's probably nothing. It's just a normal day, right?" The cat just looked at me.

"I'm not sure," a voice answered. "What would you consider normal?"

I shook my head. Surely I was still dreaming! I could have sworn Tabby just opened his mouth to speak. I pinched myself and pulled my hair to make sure I was not still sleeping. "Um, excuse me?" I said.

Now, imagine that you are the narrator of this story and that your cat suddenly has the ability to speak. What would your cat say? How would your cat's ability to speak affect you? Finish the story using vivid details and descriptions. You do not need to rewrite the beginning of the story.

**Extended Response Writing Applications Rubric
Grades 5–12**

SCORE POINT 4	
A Score Point 4 paper represents a solid performance. It fully accomplishes the task.	
Ideas and Content	
<p>Does the writing sample fully accomplish the task (e.g., support an opinion, summarize, tell a story, or write an article)? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present a unifying theme or main idea without going off on tangents? • stay focused on topic and task? <p>Does the writing sample include many relevant ideas? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide ample information and more than adequate supporting details that are developed? • explore many facets of the topic? 	
Organization	
<p>Are the ideas in the writing sample organized logically? Does the writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • present a meaningful, cohesive whole with a beginning, a middle, and an end (i.e., include a solid introduction and conclusion)? • progress in an order that enhances meaning of text? • include smooth transitions (e.g., use topic sentences) between sentences and paragraphs to enhance meaning of text? (Writing may have an occasional lapse.) 	
Style	
<p>Does the writing sample exhibit very good word usage? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include vocabulary to make explanations detailed and precise, descriptions rich, and actions clear and vivid? • demonstrate control of vocabulary? <p>Does the writing sample demonstrate very good writing technique?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the writing very fluent? • Does it include varied sentence patterns, including complex sentences? • Does it demonstrate use of writer's techniques (e.g., literary conventions such as imagery and dialogue and/or literary genres such as humor and suspense)? 	
Voice	
<p>Does the writing sample demonstrate effective adjustment of language and tone to task and reader? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exhibit appropriate register (e.g., formal, personal, or dialect) to suit task? • demonstrate a sense of audience? • exhibit an original perspective (e.g., authoritative, lively, and/or exciting)? 	

NOTE: These scoring rubrics are used with statewide assessments in Grades 5–12.

**Extended Response Writing Applications Rubric
Grades 5–12**

SCORE POINT 3

A Score Point 3 paper represents a good performance. It accomplishes the task, but generally needs to exhibit more development, better organization, or a more sophisticated writing style to receive a higher score.

Ideas and Content

Does the writing sample accomplish the task (e.g., support an opinion, summarize, tell a story, or write an article)? Does it

- present a unifying theme or main idea? (Writing may include minor tangents.)
- stay mostly focused on topic and task?

Does the writing sample include relevant ideas? Does it

- include sufficient information and supporting details? (Details may not be fully developed; ideas may be listed.)
- explore some facets of the topic?

Organization

Are the ideas in the writing sample organized logically? Does the writing

- present a meaningful whole with a beginning, a middle, and an end despite an occasional lapse (e.g., a weak introduction or conclusion)?
- generally progress in an order that enhances meaning of text?
- include transitions between sentences and paragraphs to enhance meaning of text? (Transitions may be rough, although some topic sentences are included.)

Style

Does the writing sample exhibit good word usage? Does it

- include vocabulary that is appropriately chosen, with words that clearly convey the writer's meaning?
- demonstrate control of basic vocabulary?

Does the writing sample demonstrate good writing technique?

- Is the writing fluent?
- Does it exhibit some varied sentence patterns, including some complex sentences?
- Does it demonstrate an attempt to use writer's techniques (e.g., literary conventions such as imagery and dialogue and/or literary genres such as humor and suspense)?

Voice

Does the writing sample demonstrate an attempt to adjust language and tone to task and reader? Does it

- generally exhibit appropriate register (e.g., formal, personal, or dialect) to suit task? (The writing may occasionally slip out of register.)
- demonstrate some sense of audience?
- attempt an original perspective?

NOTE: These scoring rubrics are used with statewide assessments in Grades 5–12.

**Extended Response Writing Applications Rubric
Grades 5–12**

SCORE POINT 2	
A Score Point 2 paper represents a performance that minimally accomplishes the task. Some elements of development, organization, and writing style are weak.	
Ideas and Content	
<p>Does the writing sample minimally accomplish the task (e.g., support an opinion, summarize, tell a story, or write an article)? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • attempt a unifying theme or main idea? • stay somewhat focused on topic and task? <p>Does the writing sample include some relevant ideas? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include some information with only a few details, or list ideas without supporting details? • explore some facets of the topic? 	
Organization	
<p>Is there an attempt to logically organize ideas in the writing sample? Does the writing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have a beginning, a middle, or an end that may be weak or absent? • demonstrate an attempt to progress in an order that enhances meaning? (Progression of text may sometimes be unclear or out of order.) • demonstrate an attempt to include transitions? (Are some topic sentences used? Are transitions between sentences and paragraphs weak or absent?) 	
Style	
<p>Does the writing sample exhibit ordinary word usage? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contain basic vocabulary, with words that are predictable and common? • demonstrate some control of vocabulary? <p>Does the writing sample demonstrate adequate writing technique?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the writing generally fluent? • Does it contain mostly simple sentences (although there may be an attempt at more varied sentence patterns)? • Is it generally ordinary and predictable? 	
Voice	
<p>Does the writing sample demonstrate an attempt to adjust language and tone to task and reader? Does it</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate a difficulty in establishing a register (e.g., formal, personal, or dialect)? • demonstrate little sense of audience? • generally lack an original perspective? 	

NOTE: These scoring rubrics are used with statewide assessments in Grades 5–12.

**Extended Response Writing Applications Rubric
Grades 5–12**

SCORE POINT 1

A Score Point 1 paper represents a performance that only partially accomplishes or fails to accomplish the task. Some responses may exhibit difficulty maintaining a focus. Others may be too brief to provide sufficient development of the topic or evidence of adequate organizational or writing style.

Ideas and Content

Does the writing sample only partially accomplish or fail to accomplish the task (e.g., support an opinion, summarize, tell a story, or write an article)?

- Writing may attempt a main idea, or the main idea may be difficult to discern.
- Does the writing sometimes lose focus or ineffectively establish focus?

Does the writing sample include few relevant ideas?

- Does the writing sample include little information and few or no details?
- Writing may explore only one or two facets of the topic.

Organization

Is there a minimal attempt to logically organize ideas in the writing sample?

- Does the writing have only one or two of the three elements: beginning, middle, and end?
- Is the writing sometimes difficult to follow? (Progression of text may be confusing, unclear, or difficult to discern.)
- Are transitions weak or absent (e.g., few or no topic sentences)?

Style

Does the writing sample exhibit minimal word usage? Does it

- contain limited vocabulary? (Words may be used incorrectly.)
- demonstrate minimal or less than minimal control of vocabulary?

Does the writing sample demonstrate minimal or less than minimal writing technique?

- Does the writing exhibit some or little fluency?
- Does it rely mostly on simple sentences or demonstrate problems with sentence patterns?
- Is it often repetitive, predictable, or dull?

Voice

Does the writing sample demonstrate language and tone that may be inappropriate to task and reader? Does it

- demonstrate use of a register inappropriate to the task (e.g., slang or dialect in a formal setting)?
- demonstrate little or no sense of audience?
- lack an original perspective?

NOTE: These scoring rubrics are used with statewide assessments in Grades 5–12.

Language Conventions Rubric Grades 5–8

In their writing, students will apply the Standard English conventions defined in the Indiana Academic Standards for their grade and all previous grades.

Score	Does the writing sample exhibit a good command of language skills?
4	<p>In a Score Point 4 paper, there are no errors that impair the flow of communication. Errors are infrequent and have a minor impact on the overall communication; they are generally of the first-draft variety and may occur when students attempt sophisticated sentence construction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do words have very few or no capitalization errors? • Do sentences have very few or no punctuation errors? • Do words have very few or no spelling errors? • Do sentences have very few or no grammar or word usage errors? • Writing has very few or no paragraphing errors. • Writing has very few or no run-on sentences or sentence fragments.
Score	Does the writing sample exhibit an adequate command of language skills?
3	<p>In a Score Point 3 paper, errors are occasional but do not impede the flow of communication; the writer's meaning is not seriously obscured by errors in language conventions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do words have occasional capitalization errors? • Do sentences have occasional punctuation errors? • Do words have occasional spelling errors? • Do sentences have occasional grammar or word usage errors? • Writing may have occasional paragraphing errors. • Writing may have run-on sentences or sentence fragments.
Score	Does the writing sample exhibit a minimal command of language skills?
2	<p>In a Score Point 2 paper, errors are typically frequent and may cause the reader to stop and reread part of the writing. While some aspects of the writing may be more consistently correct than others, the existing errors do impair communication. With a little extra effort on the reader's part, it is still possible to discern most, if not all, of what the writer is trying to communicate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do words have frequent capitalization errors? • Do sentences have frequent punctuation errors? • Do words have frequent spelling errors? • Do sentences have frequent grammar or word usage errors? • Writing may have errors in paragraphing, or paragraphing may be missing. • Writing is likely to have run-on sentences or sentence fragments.
Score	Does the writing sample exhibit a less than minimal command of language skills?
1	<p>In a Score Point 1 paper, errors are serious and numerous; they often cause the reader to struggle to discern the writer's meaning. Errors are frequently of a wide variety. There may be sections where it is impossible to ascertain what the writer is attempting to communicate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do words have many capitalization errors? • Do sentences have many punctuation errors? • Do words have many spelling errors? • Do sentences have many grammar and word usage errors? • Writing may have errors in paragraphing, or paragraphing may be missing. • Writing is likely to have run-on sentences or sentence fragments.

NOTE: The elements of this rubric are applied holistically; no element is intended to supersede any other element. The variety and proportion of errors in relation to the length of the writing sample are considered. A very brief paper consisting of two or three sentences may receive no more than 2 score points.

These scoring rubrics are used on the spring *ISTEP+* assessment in Grades 5–8.

Question 4, Sample A
Writing Applications – Score Point 4
Language Conventions – Score Point 4

Oh my! My cat really is talking to me!

"So, what is a normal day?" the cat repeated for the third and final time.

"Well, I guess a normal day would involve. . . my cat not talking to me!" I shouted in disbelief.

"Oh come on, seriously," the cat said.

"Okay, a normal day would be breakfast, then get on the bus, and finally here the bell and scurry off to class," I said.

"That sounds like a pretty normal school day," said the cat annoyed.

I stood there pondering the cat's words. He must have read it on my face, because the cat bursted out laughing.

I finally said, "It's saturday!"

Again, the cat was rolling on the floor, snickering.

"I can't believe it!" I repeated.

"Well you better believe it," said the cat. "Now go back to sleep."

As I pulled my blankets up to my chest and laid my head on my pillow the cat winked. Then he vanished. I shut my eyes and fell asleep to a soft purr.

Scoring Notes for Question 4, Sample A

Writing Applications – Score Point 4

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 4** using the ISTEP+ Extended-Response Writing Applications Rubric.

This sample

- fully accomplishes the task (i.e., finish narrating the story in which your cat suddenly has the ability to speak, providing details about what your cat would say and how its ability to speak affects you).
- provides more than adequate supporting details (e.g., *Again, the cat was rolling on the floor snickering.*).
- is logically organized and has a well organized body and conclusion (e.g., *I shut my eyes and fell asleep to a soft purr.*).
- uses an appropriate range of vocabulary (e.g., *“That sounds like a pretty normal school day,” said the cat [,] annoyed.*).
- is fluent and easy to read; the writer includes varied sentence patterns. (e.g., *He must have read it on my face, because the cat bursted [burst] out laughing.*).
- exhibits an appropriate register. (e.g., *My cat really is talking to me!*).

NOTE: Per the Extended-Response Writing Applications Rubric (grades 5-12), a Score Point 4 paper represents a solid performance. It fully accomplishes the task.

Language Conventions – Score Point 4

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 4** using the ISTEP+ Language Conventions Rubric.

This sample

- uses mostly correct capitalization (e.g., *saturday* [Saturday]).
- has missing commas (e.g., *“That sounds like a pretty normal school day,” said the cat [,] annoyed.”*).
- has correct spelling.
- has a grammar and a word usage error (e.g., *here* [hear], *bursted* [burst]).
- uses paragraphs effectively.

Question 4, Sample B

Writing Applications – Score Point 3

Language Conventions – Score Point 3

"Um. . . how long have you been able to speak." I said stund.

"Since I learned, Duh!" the cat said.

"Well isn't this a little weird."

then the cat said, "What a cat can't have a voice box. It get kind of annoying moewing all the time. We are supposed to keep it a secret, but you know."

"Haha, so talking cat wheres the voice recorder" I said. I grabbed the cat and tryed to find the recorder. No recorder, I had a shoked look at the cat.

"What are you doing here just staring at me for. I'm going to go get something to eat." The cat said, then walked out of the room.

As soon as the cat went in the kitchen I said to myself, "What am I going to tell mom"

Scoring Notes for Question 4, Sample B

Writing Applications - Score Point 3

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 3** using the ISTEP+ Extended-Response Writing Applications Rubric.

This sample

- accomplishes the task (i.e., finish narrating the story in which your cat suddenly has the ability to speak, providing details about what your cat would say and how its ability to speak affects you).
- includes supporting details (e.g., *I grabbed the cat and tryed [tried] to find the recorder.*).
- Attempts to organize the essay (e.g., *As soon as the cat went in the kitchen I said to myself, "What am I going to tell mom [?]"*).
- demonstrates an attempt to use writer's techniques (e.g., dialogue).
- exhibits appropriate register to suit the task. (e.g., *"Um. . . how long have you been able to speak. [?]" I said stund [stunned].*).

NOTE: A Score Point 3 paper represents a good performance. It accomplishes the task, but generally needs to exhibit more development, better organization, or a more sophisticated writing style to receive a higher score.

Language Conventions - Score Point 3

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 3** using the ISTEP+ Language Conventions Rubric.

This sample

- uses mostly correct capitalization (e.g., *then [Then]*).
- has errors in punctuation (e.g., missing or incorrectly used end marks (e.g., *"What [?] a [A] cat can't have a voice box[?]"*, *wheres [where's]*).
- has spelling errors (e.g., *stund [stunned]*, *tryed [tried]*, *shoked [shocked]*).
- has some grammar and word usage errors (e.g., *It get [gets] kind of annoying moewing [meowing] all the time.*).
- demonstrates adequate use of paragraphing.

Question 4, Sample C

Writing Applications – Score Point 2

Language Conventions – Score Point 2

Tabby how are you talking? Oh by the way I consider my cat not to talk to me thats Normal.
Oh im sorry to disturb you when do you have to go to school? I have to get ready first. Oh well
then go get ready. No you cant tell me wat to do. I need to brush my hair. So i can change. Well
im already. Well i better go to school by Tabby.

Writing Applications – Score Point 2

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 2** using the ISTEP+ Extended-Response Writing Applications Rubric.

This sample

- minimally accomplishes the task (i.e., finish narrating the story in which your cat suddenly has the ability to speak, providing details about what your cat would say and how its ability to speak affects you).
- includes some ideas with few supporting details (e.g., *I need to brush my hair.*).
- attempts to organize a paragraph with an introductory sentence, a brief body, and weak concluding sentence (e.g., *Well [,] i [I] better go to school [,] by [Bye] Tabby.*).
- uses basic vocabulary.
- contains mostly simple sentences, with an attempt at dialogue.
- attempts appropriate language and tone for the task (e.g., *Tabby [,] how are you talking?*).

NOTE: A Score Point 2 paper represents a performance that minimally accomplishes the task. Some elements of development, organization, and writing style are weak.

Language Conventions – Score Point 2

The following list describes a writing sample (shown on the previous page) that earns a **Score Point 2** using the ISTEP+ Language Conventions Rubric.

This sample

- has capitalization errors (e.g., *i [I], Normal [normal]*).
- has punctuation errors (e.g., no quotation marks, *that's [that's], im [I'm]*).
- has spelling errors (e.g., *conssider [consider], wat [what]*).
- has grammar and word usage errors (e.g., *already [all ready]*).
- consists of one paragraph.
- has run-on sentences and sentence fragments.

Question 5, Sample D

Writing Applications – Score Point 1

Language Conventions – Score Point 1

, did you just talk then the cat said "yes I did" wat my eye's must be playing a trick on me.
"No there not." ok how can you talk I mean if is a cat. "Ive always been able to talk." oh

Scoring Notes for Question 4, Sample D

Writing Applications – Score Point 1

The following list describes a writing sample (shown above) that earns a **Score Point 1** using the ISTEP+ Extended-Response Writing Applications Rubric.

This sample

- does not accomplish the task (i.e., finish narrating the story in which your cat suddenly has the ability to speak, providing details about what your cat would say and how its ability to speak affects you).
- is too brief to establish a focus or provide significant information.
- attempts a basic idea but does not develop it with supporting details.
- is too brief to provide evidence of organization.
- demonstrates less than minimal writing technique.
- is too brief to show a clear sense of register or perspective.

NOTE: A Score Point 1 paper represents a performance that only partially accomplishes or fails to accomplish the task. Some responses may exhibit difficulty maintaining a focus. Others may be too brief to provide sufficient development of the topic or evidence of adequate organizational or writing style.

Language Conventions – Score Point 1

The following list describes a writing sample (shown above) that earns a **Score Point 1** using the ISTEP+ Language Conventions Rubric.

This sample

- has capitalization errors (e.g., *did* [Did], *yes* [Yes]).
- has punctuation errors (e.g., comma at the beginning, missing quotation marks, *eye's* [eyes]).
- has spelling error (e.g., *wat* [what]).
- has grammar and word usage errors (e.g., *there* [they're], . . . *I mean if is a cat* [I mean if you are a cat]).
- has run-on sentences.
- consists of one paragraph.